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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Identical letters dated 16 May 2016 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Yesterday, 15 May 2016, marked the passage of 68 years since *Al-Nakba*, the tragedy in 1948 in which more than 800,000 Palestinians, 70 per cent of our people, were forcibly uprooted and expelled from their homes and lands or fled in fear for their lives after brutal massacres were carried out in over 400 Palestinian towns and villages by Zionist terrorist groups in Mandate Palestine in a clear act of ethnic cleansing. On this solemn occasion, the Palestinian people reflect on their past and their present with sadness and sorrow as they continue to suffer and struggle for the realization of their inalienable human rights, including their right to self-determination.

Today, *Al-Nakba* of the Palestinian people continues as millions of Palestinians continue to either live in exile as refugees, denied the inalienable right to return to their homes, or continue to live under Israel's nearly 50-year-old belligerent military occupation of the State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, where they are forced to endure the constant violation of their fundamental human rights. Indeed, with the passage of each year since *Al-Nakba* and since the occupation of the rest of historic Palestine, not a day has gone by in which the Palestinian people have not endured more loss, human and material, as well as untold suffering and hardship.

On this solemn occasion, we must also reaffirm the right of the Palestine refugees to return, a collective and individual right in accordance with international law and United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 194 (III). We reiterate that this right does not diminish with the passage of time and that respect of it is central to the attainment of a just, lasting solution to the conflict. On this occasion, we also take this opportunity to recognize the extraordinary efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and its dedicated staff for their tireless efforts to fulfil the

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Agency's mandate through the provision of education, health care, relief, emergency assistance and protection to the Palestine refugees, as well as by providing a measure of stability and some sense of hope for millions of Palestine refugees through constant crises and turmoil in the region.

It is beyond regrettable that, despite the repeated appeals and calls of the international community, including in the context of United Nations resolutions, Israel not only continues apace but has intensified and broadened the scope and scale of its violations against the Palestinian people by committing grave breaches, including war crimes, systematic human rights violations and acts of State terror, against them. Clearly, the root of all such illegal Israeli policies and practices against the Palestinian people and the continuation of its belligerent occupation has been Israel's colonial settlement enterprise. Rather than working towards ending its illegal occupation, Israel continues to carry out and impose countless illegal measures to further entrench its occupation and destroy the contiguity and viability of the Palestinian land and the prospects for realizing the two-State solution.

This can only be evidenced by Israel's latest and most recent round of aggression against the Palestinian people, in which excessive and indiscriminate force has continued to be routinely employed, causing wilful death and injury in grave violation of international humanitarian law. Since October 2015, the occupying Power has killed more than two hundred and injured and maimed thousands of Palestinian civilians, including children, women and elderly persons. Moreover, the occupying Power has rendered hundreds of Palestinians homeless as it continues with its illegal policy of punitive home demolitions. In addition, the confiscation of Palestinian land for Israel's never-ending plans to expand and build more and more illegal settlements continues, resulting in the displacement of thousands of Palestinians, including Bedouins. In this regard, just today, Israeli occupying forces demolished over 12 European Union-funded caravans housing Palestinian Bedouins in the neighbourhood of Jabal Al-Baba to the east of Occupied East Jerusalem. This latest illegal Israeli measure displaced over 90 Palestinians, most of them children. Moreover, the occupying forces continue to detain, arrest, imprison and torture thousands of Palestinian civilians, including children. The unrelenting violence, terror and provocations by extremist Israeli settlers with total impunity continue unabated, as does the continued imposition of a crippling, dehumanizing and illegal blockade of more than 1.8 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip who continue to be killed and injured and live in a constant state of fear from Israeli attacks from air, sea and land.

In this regard, I must draw attention to some of the other most recent crimes perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, in the period since our last letter to you.

29 April 2016

- Israeli occupying forces raided Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied East Jerusalem, the third holiest site in Islam, and detained dozens of Palestinian worshipers.

1 May 2016

- At least one Palestinian was shot and injured and three others detained by Israeli occupying forces during a military raid into Al-Izza refugee camp, north of Bethlehem.

- Israeli naval boats opened machine-gun fire on Palestinian fishermen sailing within six miles of the shore of Gaza.
- Israeli occupying forces detained three Palestinian minors, Majd Dari (age 15), Fadi Issawi (age 14) and Shadi Odeh (age 17), after raiding their family homes in the town of Al-Issawiya, on the outskirts of East Jerusalem.

2 May 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained at least eight Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and stole two vehicles belonging to Palestinian locals in Al-Khalil.
- Israeli occupying forces notified Palestinians in the town of Al-Issawiya, on the outskirts of East Jerusalem, about their intention to demolish their residential and commercial structures.
- Israeli occupying forces demolished an agricultural structure in the city of Qalqilia.
- Israel, the occupying Power, issued and renewed administrative detention orders against 25 Palestinians in Israeli jails, including journalist Omar Nazzal, member of the General Secretariat of the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate and President of the Democratic Journalists Union, who was arrested on the Allenby Bridge on 23 April 2016.

3 May 2016

- Israeli occupying forces punitively demolished the house of a Palestinian prisoner, Zaid Amer, located on the fourth floor of a building in Khallet Al-Eman neighbourhood in Nablus.
- Israeli occupying forces detained six Palestinians from across the West Bank.
- Israeli occupying forces detained 18 Palestinians, including at least 2 minors and a disabled man, during raids in the West Bank.
- Israeli occupying forces forced a local Palestinian family from Silwan, a neighbourhood of East Jerusalem, to demolish three commercial stores of its own under the pretext of construction without an Israeli permit.
- Israeli occupying forces opened fire and killed Ahmad Riyad Shehadeh (age 36) near the illegal Israeli settlement of "Dolev", north-west of Ramallah.

4 May 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained 19 Palestinians during predawn raids across the West Bank, including Jerusalem.
- Israeli occupying forces notified Palestinians in the village of Al-Walajeh, to the west of Bethlehem, of their intention to demolish eight homes and to stop the construction of a ninth under the pretext of construction without Israeli permits.
- An Israeli settler attacked Palestinian schoolboys en route to their school at Tal Rumeida neighbourhood in Al-Khalil's Old City.

- Israeli armoured tanks fired three artillery shells at adjacent agricultural lands and a landfill to the east of Rafah in Gaza.

5 May 2016

- Israeli warplanes targeted several locations in the besieged Gaza Strip and left one elderly Palestinian, Hasan Hasanin (age 65), and three children moderately to critically injured.
- Israeli occupying forces detained 13 Palestinians, including at least 3 minors, in the West Bank, and 1 at a Gaza border crossing.
- Israeli occupying forces prevented a Palestinian scout group from parading to celebrate the Islamic festival of Isra and Miraj in East Jerusalem.
- Israeli occupying forces stormed Al-Jawaya locality, east of Yatta, in Al-Khalil, and handed Ayed Al-Shawahin (age 35) a military order to stop the construction of his house. During the raid, occupying forces tore down Al-Shawahin's family's residential tents and seized construction equipment.

6 May 2016

- Three Palestinians, including two journalists, were injured as Israeli occupying forces dispersed the weekly protest in Kafr Qaddum in Qalqiliya. In the village of Bilin, dozens suffered from tear gas inhalation as Israeli occupying forces dispersed the weekly protest there, causing a fire to erupt on land belonging to Awad Yasin in the Khallat Al-Ful area. A Palestinian was also shot and injured by Israeli occupying forces near Al-Mintar (Karni) crossing in the eastern Gaza Strip.

7 May 2016

- Israeli occupying forces opened fire on a group of Palestinian shepherds on the eastern outskirts of Gaza City.

8 May 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained at least seven Palestinians, mostly during predawn raids across the West Bank.
- Israeli occupying forces shot and injured a Palestinian youth, Khalil Ta'mari, in Wadi Al-Hummus area, south-east of East Jerusalem.
- Israeli occupying forces razed a Palestinian-owned 50-dunum land and uprooted 50 olive trees in the village of Kafr Qaddum, east of Qalqilia.
- A group of extremist Israeli settlers attacked two Palestinian human rights activists in the Tal Rumeida area in Al-Khalil.
- Israeli occupying forces opened fire on Palestinian farmers in the southern Gaza Strip.

9 May 2016

- Israeli occupying forces announced their illegal plan to seize 419 dunums of Palestinian land in the Jerusalem towns of Lifta and Beit Iksa to expand the illegal "Ramot" settlement.
- Israeli settlers raided and took over a Palestinian-owned home in East Jerusalem.
- Israeli occupying forces detained 16 Palestinians, including 2 minors, during raids across the West Bank.
- Israeli occupying forces have expropriated a Palestinian-owned piece of land in East Jerusalem from its original owners and handed it over to an organization called "Amana" that works to establish illegal settlements and outposts.
- Israeli occupying forces opened fire at Palestinian farmers tending to their fields on the outskirts of the village of Khuzaa, to the east of Khan Yunis in Gaza.

10 May 2016

- Israeli occupying forces ordered Palestinians to stop the construction of five privately owned homes and a water pipeline project in the village of Al-Aqaba to the east of Tubas.
- A number of Palestinian students and staff from Al-Khalil's Health Work Committees' Emergency Centre were suffocated by tear gas fired by Israeli occupying forces directly towards students and inside the Centre.
- Israeli occupying forces demolished a Palestinian home under construction in the village of Al-Walaja to the west of Bethlehem under the pretext of lacking an Israeli permit.
- Israeli occupying forces detained 16 Palestinians, including 4 minors, from across the West Bank.
- Israeli occupying forces handed a number of Palestinian locals in the village of Susiya, to the south of Al-Khalil, notices to demolish their residential structures.
- Israeli settlers stole three sheep belonging to a Palestinian shepherd near the village of Aqraba, south of Nablus.

11 May 2016

- Israeli occupying forces seized closed-circuit television camera recordings during a raid into Al-Khader town, south of Bethlehem.
- Israeli occupying forces shot and injured two young Palestinian men, one of them seriously, in the village of Kafr Aqab, north of occupied East Jerusalem.
- Israeli occupying forces issued and renewed administrative detention orders against 13 Palestinian detainees.

12 May 2016

- Israeli occupying forces handed a notice to the family of three Palestinian prisoners informing them that their home would be punitively demolished, under the pretext of construction without an Israeli permit.
- Israeli occupying forces detained three Palestinians, including a teen, during overnight raids into the West Bank.

14 May 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained three Palestinians from Al-Khalil and Jerusalem.
- Violent Israeli settlers stormed the family house of Riyad Abu Hazza', in Tal Rumeida neighbourhood in Al-Khalil, where they beat Abu Hazza's wife, causing several bruises and cuts across her body, then one of the terrorist settlers pepper-sprayed her daughter in the face, causing her to faint.

15 May 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained four Palestinians from Bethlehem and Al-Khalil, in addition to an elderly person from Jerusalem.
- Israeli occupying forces continued their blockade of the town of Hazma, in East Jerusalem, for the fifth consecutive day.
- Two Palestinian detainees in Israeli jails have been on an open-ended hunger strike for 43 days in protest of being held in jail without charge or trial.

16 May 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained at least 11 Palestinian civilians across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.
- Israeli occupying forces dismantled 12 Palestinian-owned caravans in Jabal Al-Baba neighbourhood, near the town of Al-Ezariya to the east of Jerusalem.
- Israeli occupying forces opened heavy machine-gun fire towards Palestinian farmers who were attempting to reach their agricultural land to the east of Gaza City.
- A Palestinian worker was moderately injured when Israeli occupying forces opened live fire at him near Bethlehem.

After nearly 50 years of occupation and nearly 70 years since *Al-Nakba*, we will not relent in our calls and efforts for the upholding of international law and the protection of our people towards the realization of justice, the fulfilment of their inalienable rights and legitimate national aspirations, including to independence in their State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace, which we have for so long sought and which is so urgently needed for both regional and international peace and security. In this context, the time to act, with responsibility and conscience, is long overdue to bring an end to Israel's almost five-decade-old occupation and to all of its crimes against the unprotected Palestinian civilian population and their land.

This letter is in follow-up to our 585 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 29 April 2016 (A/ES-10/721-S/2016/402), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the
State of Palestine to the United Nations